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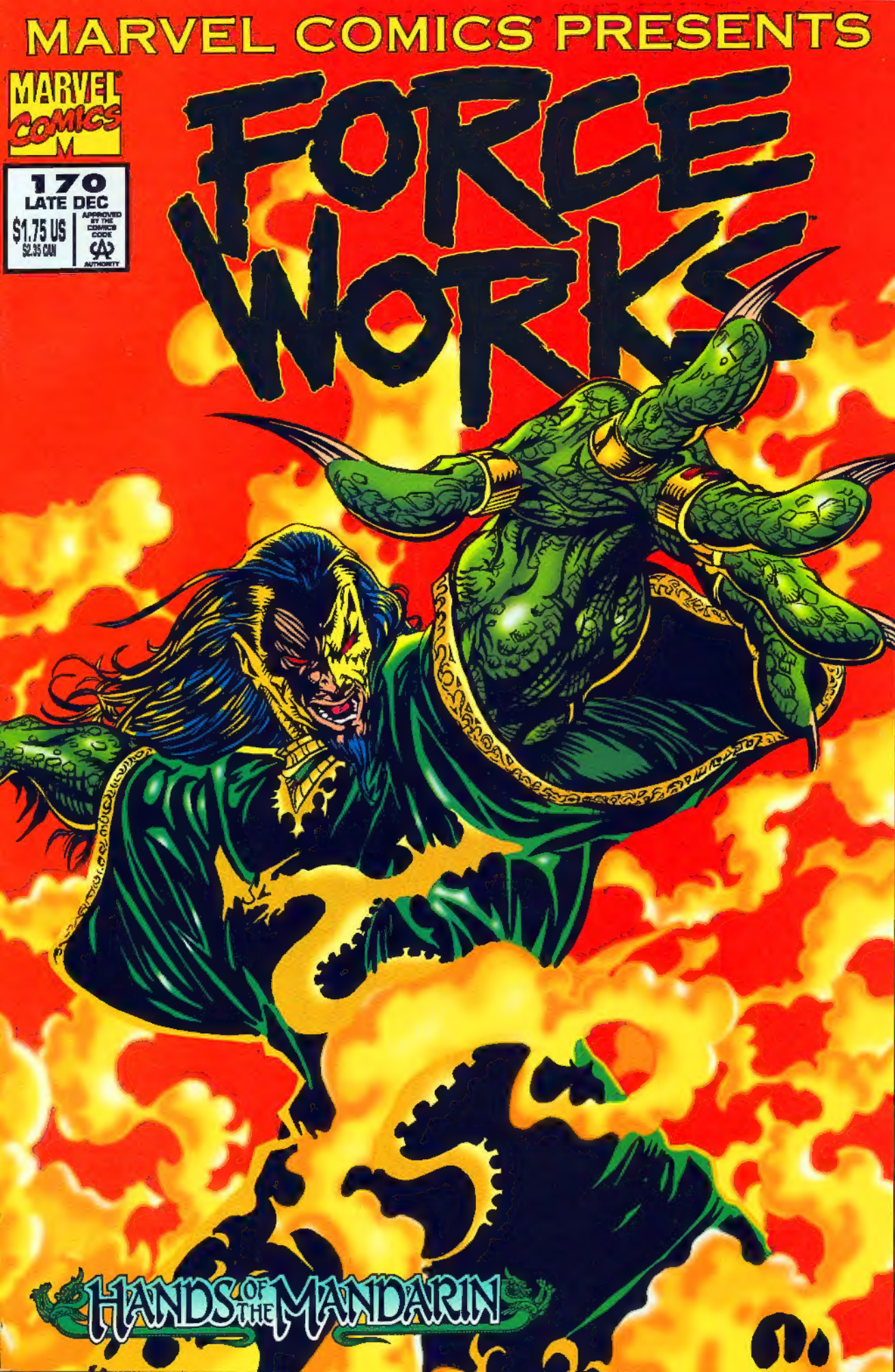
FORCE WORKS



HANDS OF THE MANDARIN

MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS

RICHARD ASHFORD EDITOR
MICHAEL KRAIGER ASSISTANT EDITOR
RALPH MACCHIO GROUP EDITOR
TOM DEFALCO EDITOR IN CHIEF

COVER BY PATRICK ROLO/REGGIE JONES

FORCEWORKS

"IN THE HANDS OF THE MANDARIN"
PART 2 OF 2

WRITERS .....LEN KAMINISKI
SCOTT BENSON
PENCILS .....PATRICK ROLO
INKS .....REGGIE JONES
LETTERS.....UL HIGGINS
COLORS.....FRANK LOPEZ

The Mandarin must confront demons from his past, and overcome previous failures to claim his inheritance, The Heart of Darkness!

SUZI

WRITER .....DAN ABNETT
ARTIST .....REY GARCIA
LETTERS .....MADONNA
COLORS .....FRANK LOPEZ

Suzi Endo of Stark Industries in Hong Kong witnesses an attack of super-powered demons, and their battle with the Stark Industries funded FORCE WORKS!

CROSSOVER INFO

To keep tabs on the entire **HANDS OF THE MANDARIN** crossover, for which we have been presenting parallel stories here in **MCP**, check out:

FORCE WORKS #6	**PART 1**
WAR MACHINE #9	**PART 2**
IRON MAN #311	**PART 3**
FORCE WORKS #7	**PART 4**
WAR MACHINE #10	**PART 5**
IRON MAN #312	**PART 6**

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MARVEL READERS PRESENT

C/O 387 PARK AVENUE SOUTH, NEW YORK, NY, 10016

Dear Richard and Michael,

Behold the man indeed! I wrote to you a little while back (MCP # 161) and mentioned that I'd love to see you drag the swamp for some new Man Thing stories. A few issues latter what comes crawling from the muck but the very creature of my Spanish-moss nightmares. Wow! Paul Johnson's art was incredible, he brought such realism to the page. I wasn't sure where Simon Jowett was leading us with his story, but I think that added to the over-all mystery. I'm still left scratching my head in regards to the ending, was this all some writer's dream? Or was it a dream from the moss choked mind of Ted Sallis deep within the Man-Thing? I feel it was probably the latter, please give us more by this creative team. I think that they are possibly the best choice to continue tracking the monster through the swamps and bayous (with the possible exception of Steve Gerber and Mike Ploog). In my letter in 161 I asked you to bring back the shambling man-monster, and you did. Now I'll go for broke and ask you to bring back another of my favorite titles from the days of yore, THE MICRONAUTS! Hey, how about it? I think it would be great to see them appear once again. Thanks for the Man-Thing, I'll be waiting to see what you deliver next.

Scott Clark
(address withheld by request)

Micronauts? Scott, weren't they really really little guys that were drawn really really well by a guy who seems to only be drawing covers these days? Glad you liked Jowett and Johnson's take on the Man-Thing, we thought the work was incredible when it came into our office and are happy to have had the opportunity to share it with you. You'll most likely want to know that the two are dredging the swamp once again, more on that later.

Richard and MCP crews,

I have always liked the format of anthology titles, it seemed to me you were getting more for your dollar, along with the chance to check out different characters and creative teams. I have been picking up MCP for a couple of years now and have to say I have mostly enjoyed the work I found within its pages. Oh sure, there have been a few clunkers, but there have also been some real fine stories.

What got me started on MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS was Wolverine, I liked to see him in solo adventures, far from the maddening crowd over in the X-Men titles. Even after he left as a regular I stuck around because I enjoyed the diversity that I found within MCP. I had also become addicted to its biweekly schedule.

The one major thing that I've took notice to is the Ghost Rider, Vengeance stories, Where I don't have every issue of MCP and can't check it out, I believe that the Ghost Rider, Vengeance team-up of writer, Chris Cooper and artists, Fred Harper and Reggie Jones has been one of the longest running on the book. It has been interesting watching this crew, I know Chris was the writer of the DARKHOLD series but I don't recall seeing either Mr. Harper's or MR. Jones's work previous to their appearance in MCP. Where I think Vengeance should have been more distinctly different from Ghost Rider, I prefer Michael Badilino to Dan Ketch. Unfortunately I don't think Chris has let us see enough of this characters duality. Mr. Cooper-

(continued on cover three)

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RALPH MACCHIO GROUP EDITOR
TOM DEFALCO EDITOR IN CHIEF

COVER BY JOHN CZOP/TIM DZON

VENGEANCE

"SHRINKING TO NOTHING"
PART 1

WRITER .....CHRIS COOPER
BREAKDOWNS .....REGGIE JONES
FINISHES .....FRED HARPER
LETTERS .....DIANA ALBERS
COLORS .....ASHLEY POSELLA

Doc Samson specializes with some very unusual clients, like, Bruce Banner, the Hulk, and now, Michael Badilino/Vengeance. The doctor is in... trouble as, Psychobabble, one of his most unusual and dangerous clients tries his patience.

RED WOLF

WRITER .....ALAN COWSILL
PENCILS .....JIMMY CHUNG
INKS .....MARTIN GRIFFITHS
LETTERS .....PAT PRENTICE
COLORS .....FRANK LOPEZ

The stakes are high for Red Wolf and the people of the Mashantucket Pequot nation, as the vicious Maggia attempt to take a way the very thing that has helped them back from extinction

FROM RICHARD AND MICHAEL

Rumors, we hear lots and lots of rumors, these days with electronic bulletin boards and the connectedness of the internet, these rumors can spread as fast as it takes someone to type them onto a keyboard. And though we might be loath to admit it, we love to hear gossip about the industry and the people in it. Who's quit what book and why, who's dating who over at that other company. And what so and so said about, you know who missing their deadlines because they were up to who knows what. It is an information age, and we want all the information we can get as fast as we can get it, and if we can get it before anyone else, so much the better. Now there are rumors that are nasty and don't bear repeating, and there are rumors that are funny, that you'd only repeat to your closest of friends and *only* in the strictest of confidence. And there are rumors that are the wildest lies, that will spread like wildfire, and you'll never know who is fanning the flames. And there are rumors that are true.

You may have heard rumblings, or little birds may have landed on your shoulder. Or perhaps you have read the smoke signals where others just see clouds. MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS has been canceled. It's no longer a rumor, but true. Sagging sales have precipitated it's demise, Issue #175 will be the last. But fortunately and fastidiously the editorial crew will be carrying on with some special projects related to MCP. We'll have more information about these projects for you in the upcoming weeks.

Keeping eyes and ears open,
Richard and Michael

MARVEL READERS PRESENT

C/O 387 PARK AVENUE SOUTH, NEW YORK, NY, 10016

has handled it well, I just feel that perhaps the stories might have been better served, had we been able to see more of this character's tortured struggle (perhaps longer stories). It seems perfect, a cop sworn to serve and protect, taught what is right and what is wrong, struggling with the monster inside of himself. Granted, the monster is fighting a similar fight, against those who have spilled innocent blood, but in a way so much different than what Michael Badilino would know as a mortal man. I think one of the most recent story arcs has also been one of the best, the little horror that is Diabolique. What a truly eerie concept, Playmate was Barker-esque while Diabolique was worthy of Stephen King himself. I wanted to know more of this foul child and where she had risen from. I think this story would have benefited with more pages. Harper and Jones's artwork was great on this segment and will cause me to shudder should I ever see a little girl on a subway platform. Mentioning the art I have noticed a certain unevenness at times, perhaps because Mr. Jones is only doing the breakdowns? Harper's rendering seemed unfinished at first but I must say I have come to like it quite a bit particularly the faces. I remember seeing Reggie Jones' penciling and inking on a Daughters of the Dragon strip a while back and was struck by the contrast between that work and the work on the Ghost Rider, Vengeance stories. I didn't mean to go on so about this so much but looking back it has been an interesting journey that this particular artistic team has taken us on. Some of the other recent features that I've quite liked have been, MACE, excellent art on that one. the Shang-Chi stories as well, has featured some exciting art.

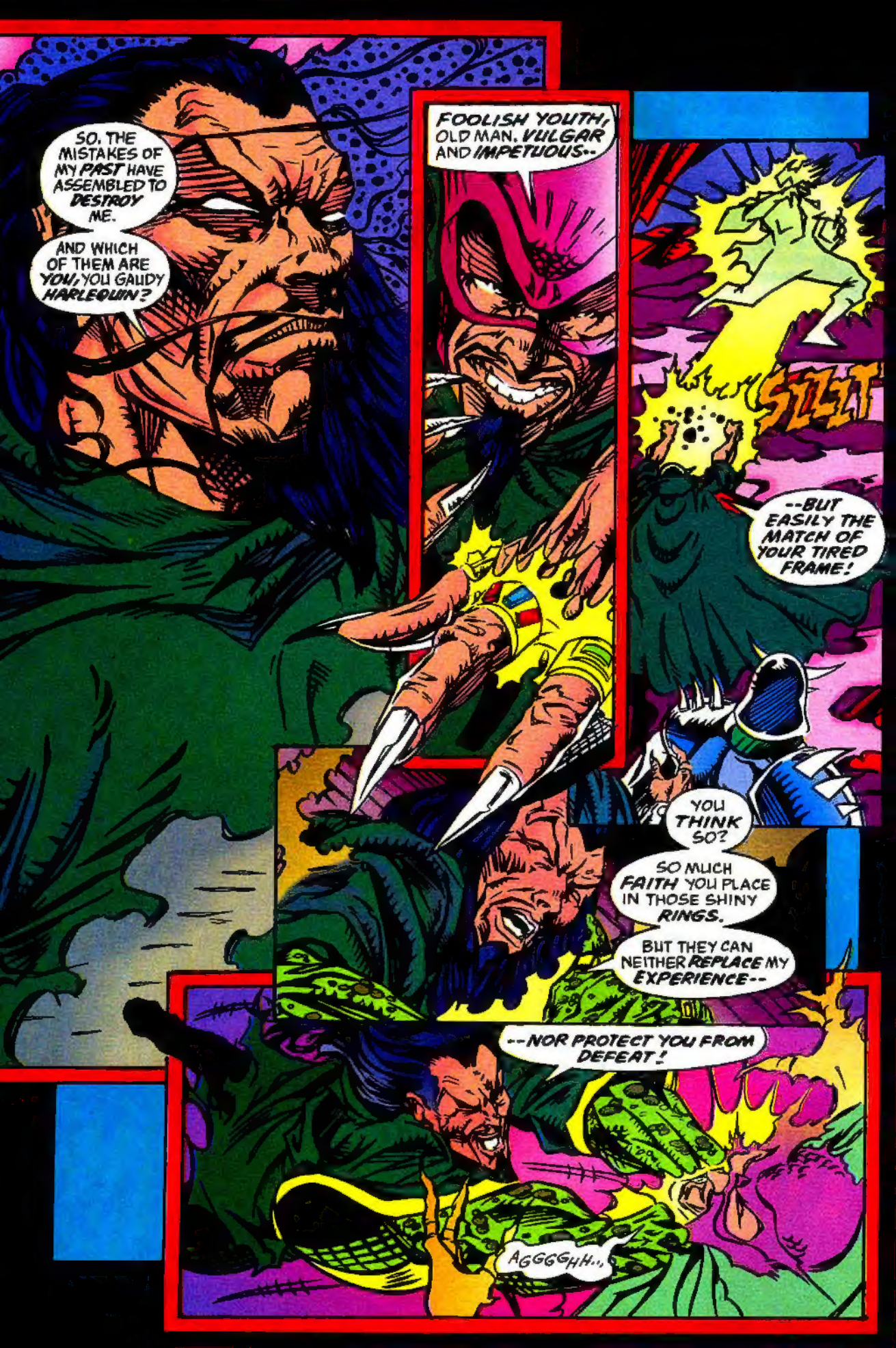
I look forward to finding new and exciting features in MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS, as well as continued enjoyment of the features I've come to know within your pages.

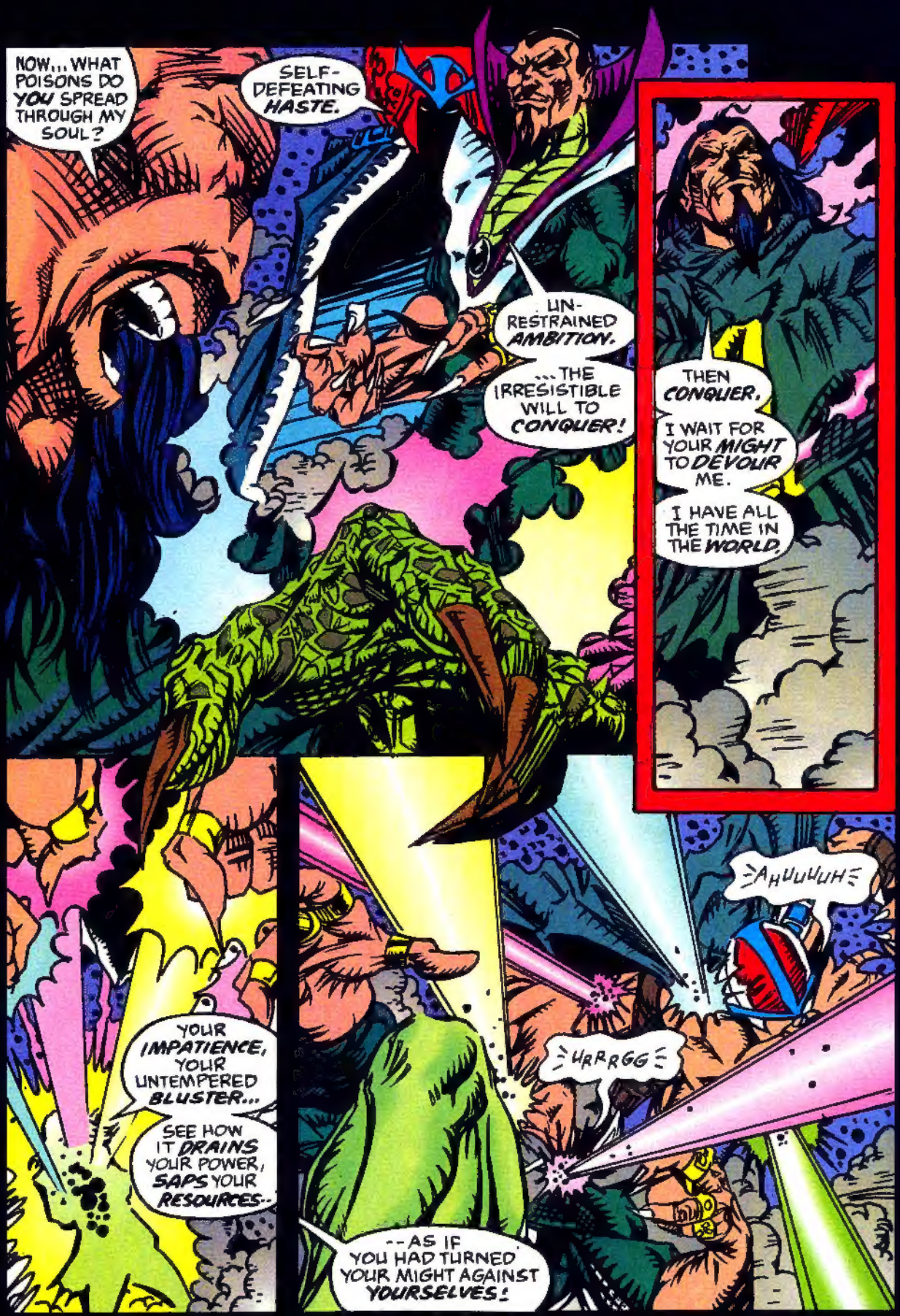
Darrel W. Forst Jr.
1641 Plankboard Rd.
Plainfield WI

If you haven't read the editorial to the left of this column read it now, before we answer Darrel's letter, if you already have you may continue.

Sadly, Darrel your time to enjoy MCP is limited, we really enjoyed getting such a thoughtful letter as yours which seemed to look back on a period of a creative team's development as well as MCP's history and not just a particular story or issue. Folks, you've read the bad news, now lets hear from you. How many of you out there have every issue? What was your all-time favorite story, story arc, or issue? What was the worst piece of trash that we've printed? You have five more issues of MARVEL READERS PRESENT so let's fill them up with your best, worst, funniest, or most touching memories of MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS.

YOU'RE CURRENTLY INSIDE THE MIND OF THE MANDARIN...
... COURTESY OF AN OTHERWORLDLY SPHERE KNOWN, FOR WANT OF A BETTER NAME, AS THE HEART OF DARKNESS.
THE OBJECT OF THE EXERCISE: A BATTLE BETWEEN SAID MANDARIN AND THE INCARNATIONS OF HIS EARLIER SELVES.
THE PRIZE AT STAKE IS THE MANDARIN'S MASTERY OF HIS OWN DEADLY FAILINGS...
... WHICH, FOR WANT OF A BETTER NAME, ARE BEST DESCRIBED AS:
INNER DEMONS


SO. THE MISTAKES OF MY PAST HAVE ASSEMBLED TO DESTROY ME.
AND WHICH OF THEM ARE YOU, YOU GAUDY HARLEQUIN?
FOOLISH YOUTH, OLD MAN. VULGAR AND IMPETUOUS--
SLLT
--BUT EASILY THE MATCH OF YOUR TIRED FRAME!
YOU THINK SO?
SO MUCH FAITH YOU PLACE IN THOSE SHINY RINGS.
BUT THEY CAN NEITHER REPLACE MY EXPERIENCE--
--NOR PROTECT YOU FROM DEFEAT!
AGGGGHH..,


NOW... WHAT POISONS DO YOU SPREAD THROUGH MY SOUL?
SELF-DEFEATING HASTE.
UN-RESTRAINED AMBITION.
...THE IRRESISTIBLE WILL TO CONQUER!
THEN CONQUER.
I WAIT FOR YOUR MIGHT TO DEVOUR ME.
I HAVE ALL THE TIME IN THE WORLD.
YOUR IMPATIENCE, YOUR UNTEMPERED BLUSTER...
SEE HOW IT DRAINS YOUR POWER, SAPS YOUR RESOURCES--
--AS IF YOU HAD TURNED YOUR MIGHT AGAINST YOURSELVES!
=AHUUUUUH=
=URRRGG=

MYSTICISM! WORTHLESS PHILOSOPHY!
WHAT WORTH ARE THEY AGAINST THE POWER OF MY SCIENCE--
--A MARCH IMPOSSIBLE TO HALT.
AH, SCIENCE, THE TOOL OF MY WORTHIEST FOE, THE IRON MAN...
...THE PLAYTHING OF A CHILD WITH TOO MUCH IDLE TIME AND TOO LITTLE WISDOM.
IT IS NOTHING AS YOU ARE NOTHING.
YOUR ARMOR TEARS AWAY IN MY HANDS,
...THAN PAPER IN THE WIND.
NO MORE POWERFUL, NO MORE SUBSTANTIAL...

SUCH OTHERS ARE EASILY DEFEATED. NOT I.
NONE ARE AS POWERFUL, AS FEARSOME, AS AWE-INSPIRING.
I CAN NEVER BE DEFEATED.
YOUR NAME I KNOW WITHOUT ASKING...
...IT IS ARROGANCE. IT IS PRIDE.
THIS POOR ONE HAS NEVER BEHELD ONE SO GREAT AS YOU--
--AND I HUMBLE MYSELF IN YOUR PRESENCE.
DO WITH ME AS YOU WILL.
FIGHT ME! MATCH MY MAGNIFICENCE! YOU MUST!
PLEASE...
...FIGHT...
... MEEE...

IT IS DONE.
YOU HAVE FACED YOUR OWN HEART OF DARKNESS.
I HAVE... DEFEATED THEM? MASTERED MY FLAWS?
YES, SO IT MUST BE!
I STAND READY NOW TO ENTER THE DOORWAYS TO POWER...
...TO TAKE THE PLACE OF MY ANCESTOR, THE KHAN!
I AM WORTHY! I AM REBORN!
IS IT NOT SO?
IT IS AS I TOLD YOU...
...HERE, ALL ONE BELIEVES IS SO.

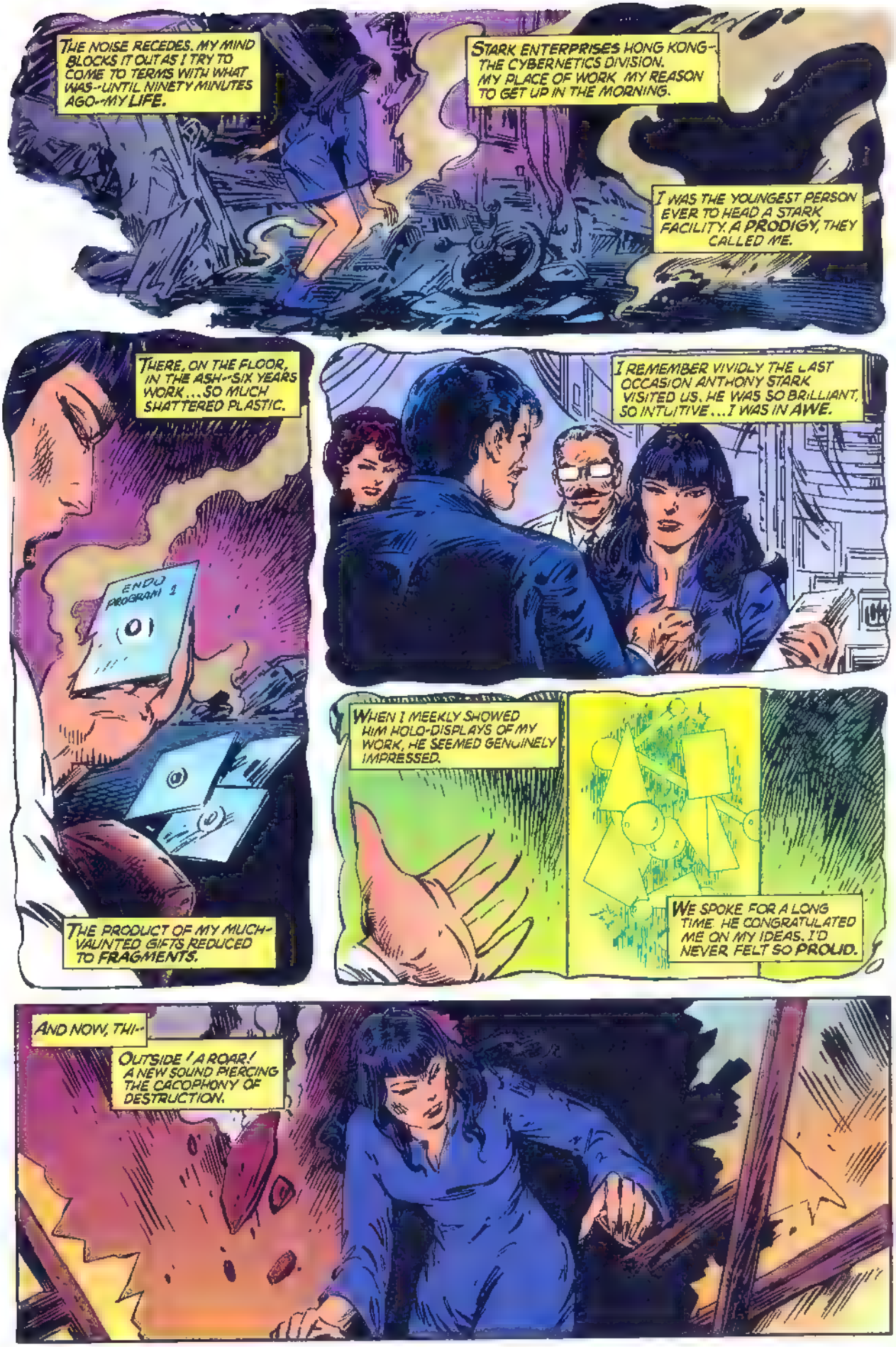
NOT LONG AFTER...
...A GROUP OF RED ARMY SOLDIERS RIDE PAST AN ANCIENT WRECK OF A CASTLE...
...IN TIME TO WITNESS...
...A MOST REMARKABLE TRANSFORMATION!
AH, THE MILITARY MIGHT OF A LAND SOON TO BE GONE FOREVER.
I SEE YOU ARE IMPRESSED BY THE IMPROVEMENTS TO MY NEW HOME.
YOU MAY THANK THIS MAGICAL ORB FOR IT.
WHAT'S GOING ON HERE? EXPLAIN YOURSELF!

IT IS NOT FOR YOU TO DEMAND--
--BUT TO OBEY!
THAT'S BETTER.
CONSIDER YOUR FORTUNE. I HAVE SELECTED YOU TO STAND BY MY SIDE...
...WHICH YOU SHALL SOON FIND IS THE SAFEST PLACE TO BE.
YOU ARE NOW THE ARMY OF THE MANDARIN..
...AND WE STRIDE FORTH TO TRANSFORM THE WORLD!
YOU'VE SEEN THE BEGINNING--WILL THE WORLD SURVIVE ITS END?
THE ANSWERS ARE IN HANDS OF THE MANDARIN--KICKING OFF IN FORCE WORKS #6, ON SALE NOW!

I STAND ON THE THIRD FLOOR OF A SHUDDERING BUILDING AND LOOK DOWN INTO THE STREETS OF HONG KONG BELOW ME. WHAT I SEE THERE...
MY MIND REFUSES TO ACCEPT.
SUZI
SHHTOOM

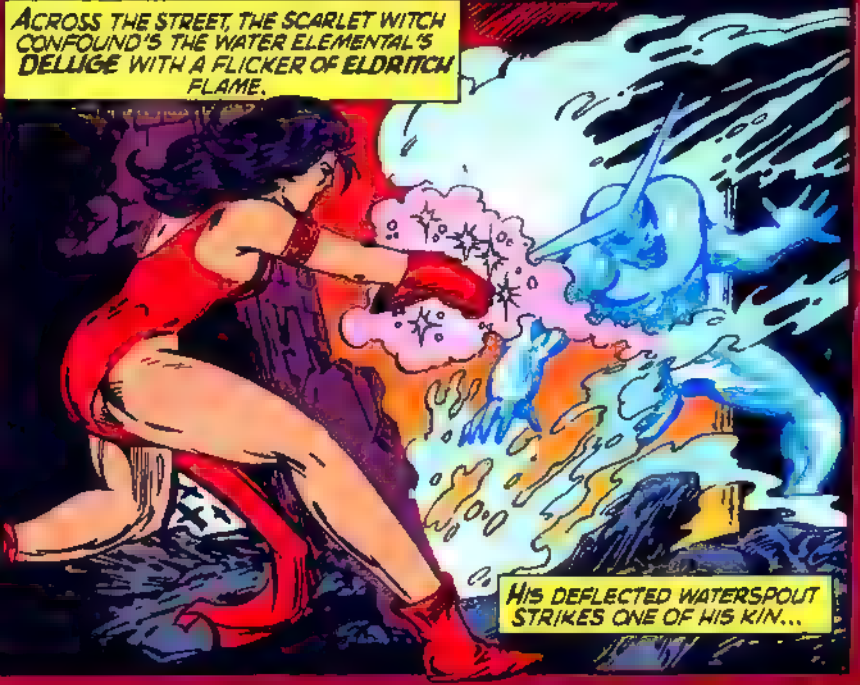
I DO NOT KNOW WHAT THOSE MONSTERS ARE.
ONE HARNESSES THE GEYSER OF A BROKEN HYDRANT, AND SWEEPS AWAY THE FLEEING CROWD IN A FLASH-FLOOD DELUGE.
THEN A GRINNING, GHOUL-THING AT HER HEELS RENDS THE MAIMED POLICE APART WITH HIS TALONS.
WHERE HER SHADOW FALLS, GUNS MISFIRE AND EXPLODE.
ANOTHER DRIFTS ACROSS THE RANKS OF ARMED POLICE.
JUST AN HOUR AGO, AS THE ATTACK BEGAN, I TRIED TO RAISE HELP...
...THIS IS SUZI ENDO, BROADCASTING ON ALL CHANNELS FROM STARK INDUSTRIES IN HONG KONG! PLEASE--IF ANYONE CAN HEAR ME...
...WE ARE UNDER ATTACK! WE ARE UNDER ATTACK!

My call was SILENCED when another of the monsters tore into the building.
FRAK-RUUM
~OOOHH!
Now I stand by the smoking ruin of the communications console...
...wondering if anyone heard my call.
When the monster attacked, I fled and hid in the sub-basement. Only now have I dared to re-emerge.
They have left this building for dead, an empty, burned-out husk
I can hear the carnage from the street as they move on.


THE NOISE RECEDES. MY MIND BLOCKS IT OUT AS I TRY TO COME TO TERMS WITH WHAT WAS--UNTIL NINETY MINUTES AGO--MY LIFE.
STARK ENTERPRISES HONG KONG--THE CYBERNETICS DIVISION. MY PLACE OF WORK. MY REASON TO GET UP IN THE MORNING.
I WAS THE YOUNGEST PERSON EVER TO HEAD A STARK FACILITY. A PRODIGY, THEY CALLED ME.
THERE, ON THE FLOOR, IN THE ASH--SIX YEARS WORK...SO MUCH SHATTERED PLASTIC.
ENDO PROGRAM 1
THE PRODUCT OF MY MUCH-VAUNTED GIFTS REDUCED TO FRAGMENTS.
I REMEMBER VIVIDLY THE LAST OCCASION ANTHONY STARK VISITED US. HE WAS SO BRILLIANT, SO INTUITIVE...I WAS IN AWE.
WHEN I MEEKLY SHOWED HIM HOLO-DISPLAYS OF MY WORK, HE SEEMED GENUINELY IMPRESSED.
WE SPOKE FOR A LONG TIME. HE CONGRATULATED ME ON MY IDEAS. I'D NEVER FELT SO PROUD.
AND NOW, THI--
OUTSIDE / A ROAR! A NEW SOUND PIERCING THE CACOPHONY OF DESTRUCTION.

I RUSH TO THE WINDOW IN TIME TO SEE THEM LEAP INTO ATTACK FROM THEIR HOVERING SHIP.
FORCE WORKS. A SUPERHUMAN TEAM THAT STARK HAS CHOSEN TO FUND. ALL STARK EMPLOYEES WERE INFORMED OF THEM IN A RECENT MEMO. PERHAPS MY CALL WAS HEARD.
I SEE SPIDER-WOMAN, THE SCARLET WITCH, U.S. AGENT AND THE ALIEN CENTURY. OF IRON MAN THERE IS NO SIGN.
THEY DRIVE A WEDGE INTO THE MONSTROUS ASSAULT, MEETING POWER WITH POWER. THE BUILDING SHAKES WITH RENEWED VIGOR.

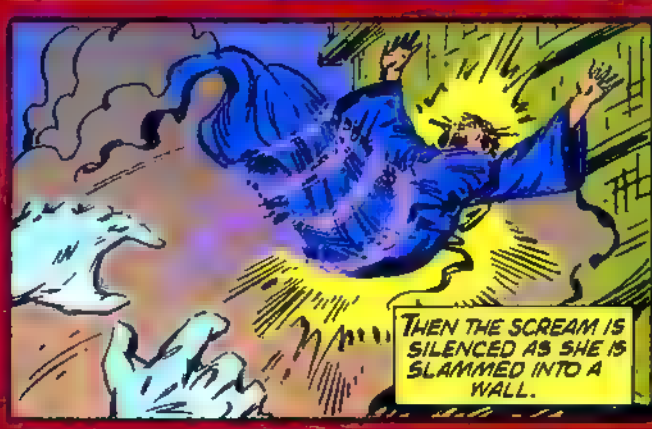
AS I WATCH, CENTURY--WITH ONE BLOW--DEMOLISHES THE BEING WHO DESTROYED MY BUILDING.
NEARBY, SPIDER-WOMAN GRAPPLES WITH THE TALONED GHOUL. I HEAR HER CALL ON CENTURY FOR HELP.
BUT...
...WITHOUT WARNING, WITHOUT REASON, WITHOUT LISTENING TO HER CRIES...
...HE VANISHES.
I DO NOT UNDERSTAND. ALL I KNOW IS SPIDER-WOMAN WILL SURELY BE KILLED...
THERE IS A SOUND LIKE THUNDER.
U.S. AGENT FIRES HIS PHASED-PHOTON WEAPON AT THE CREATURE, BLASTING IT ASIDE.
SPIDER-WOMAN DOES NOT DIE.
I'M TOO FAR AWAY TO HEAR HIS COMMENTS.
...BUT FROM THE LOOK ON THE AGENT'S FACE, CENTURY'S DEPARTURE WAS AS UNWELCOME AS IT WAS UNEXPECTED.


ACROSS THE STREET, THE SCARLET WITCH CONFOUND'S THE WATER ELEMENTAL'S DELUGE WITH A FLICKER OF ELDRITCH FLAME.
HIS DEFLECTED WATERSPOUT STRIKES ONE OF HIS KIN...

...WHOSE WHITE HOT, FURNACE-LIKE NATURE REACTS ADVERSELY TO THE DRENCHING.

THREE OF THE MONSTERS HAVE FALLEN.
TURNING, THE SCARLET WITCH SHOUTS AN ORDER TO SPIDER-WOMAN.
SHE SNARES THE FLYING DEMON IN A COIL OF ENERGIZED GOSSAMER.

THE DEMON SCREAMS... IT IS A SOUND I HOPE NEVER TO HEAR AGAIN.


THEN THE SCREAM IS SILENCED AS SHE IS SLAMMED INTO A WALL.

BELOW ME, THE AGENT TRADES STINGING BLOWS WITH THE GHOUL-CREATURE

He does not give the creature a SECOND chance.
Suddenly, there is a sea-change in the monsters' demeanor. They struggle to their feet as the flying demon barks instruction...
...and retreat into the swirling smoke.
It is a sort of victory.
But there is no rejoicing from the shattered city below. The skyline is as grim and BROKEN as my heart.
Only the ghoul is left behind...
...a PRISONER of this WAR. Perhaps in time he will reveal the motive for this senseless outrage.
And I fear that all I have really witnessed today...
...is the beginning of something far WORSE.
Next issue: more FORCE WORK!

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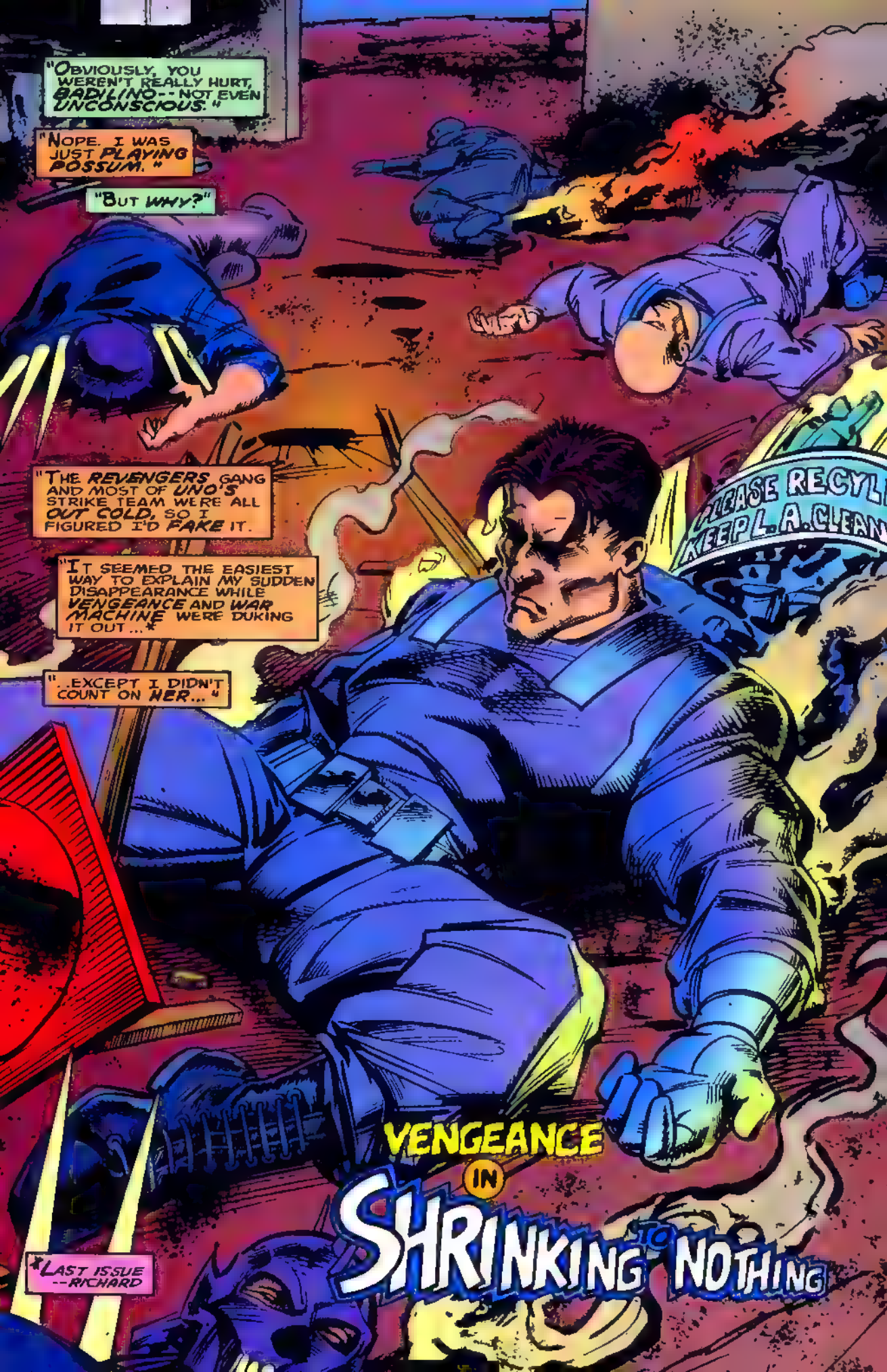
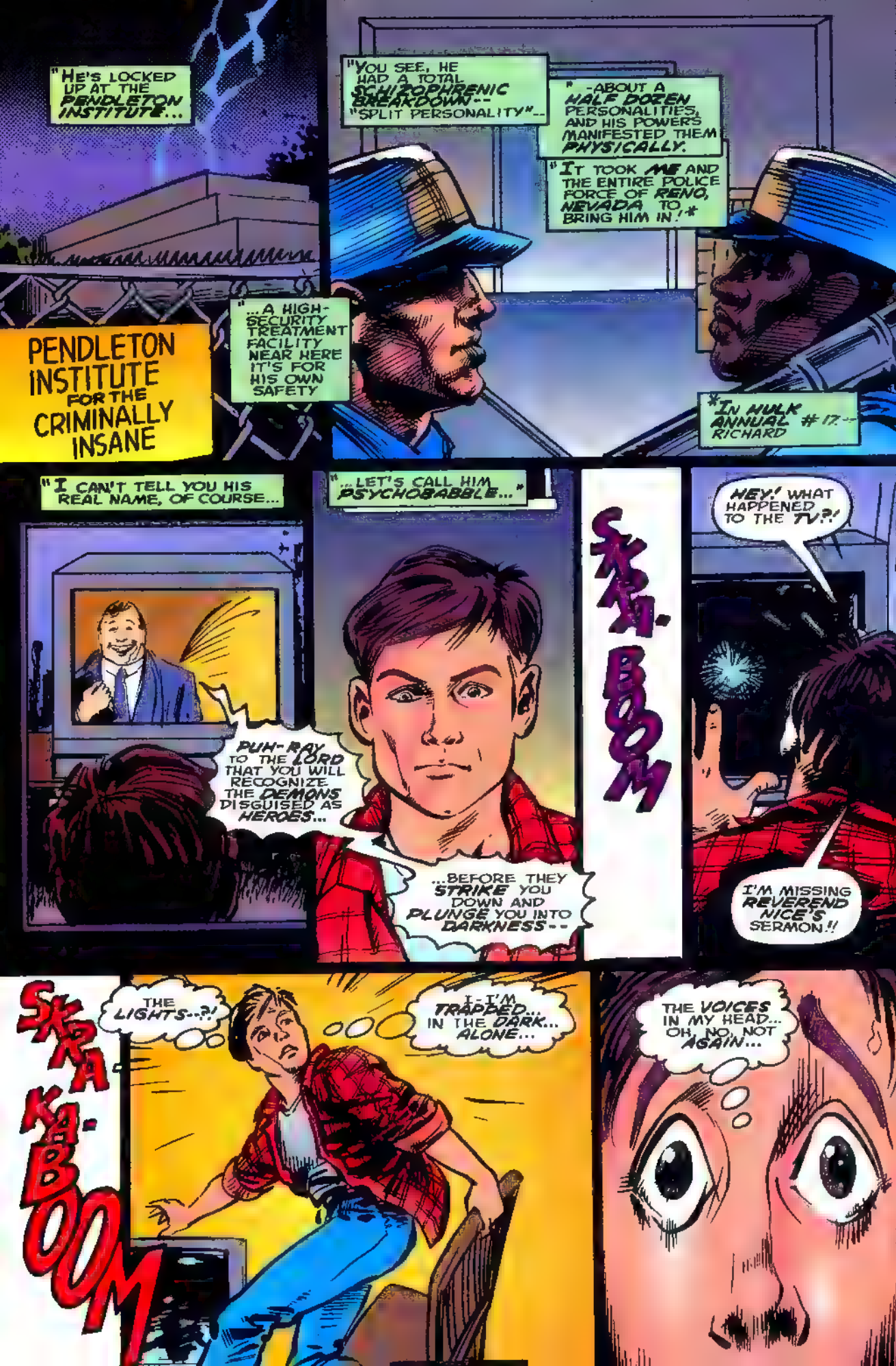

"OBVIOUSLY, YOU WEREN'T REALLY HURT, BADLINO -- NOT EVEN UNCONSCIOUS."
"NOPE. I WAS JUST PLAYING POSSUM."
"BUT WHY?"
"THE REVENGERS GANG AND MOST OF UNO'S STRIKE TEAM WERE ALL OUT COLD, SO I FIGURED I'D FAKE IT.
"IT SEEMED THE EASIEST WAY TO EXPLAIN MY SUDDEN DISAPPEARANCE WHILE VENGEANCE AND WAR MACHINE WERE DUKING IT OUT...*
"...EXCEPT I DIDN'T COUNT ON HER..."
*LAST ISSUE --RICHARD
VENGEANCE IN SHRINKING TO NOTHING

"HER? YOU MEAN REBECCA TAYLOR."
"YEAH. SHE WAS ONE OF THE FEW OF OUR STRIKE TEAM STILL CONSCIOUS.
"SHE WAS PATROLLING ON CLEAN CLEANUP DUTY WHEN SHE FOUND ME."
"YOU TWO SEEM FRIENDLY. SHE MUST HAVE BEEN WORRIED."
"UMM. . WELL...
"SHE KICKED ME.
"HARD."
SO SHE KNEW YOU WERE FAKING, EH?
REBECCA SHE'S AMAZING-- INTELLIGENT, INTUITIVE...
I SEE. DO YOU THINK SHE KNOWS THAT YOU'RE VENGEANCE?
NO WAY! YOU'RE ONE OF THE FEW PEOPLE I'VE EVER TOLD MY SECRET, DOC SAMSON--
AND THAT SECRET, AND ANYTHING ELSE YOU REVEAL HERE, IS IN THE STRICTEST CONFIDENCE, SO DON'T WORRY.
LOOK, WHY ALL THE QUESTIONS ABOUT REBECCA ANYWAY? THAT'S NOT WHY I'M HERE!

I HATE THIS PSYCHOANALYSIS STUFF!
THE ONLY REASON I'VE CAME TO YOU WAS BECAUSE I NEED HELP -- HELP IN CONTROLLING THIS VIOLENT THING I BECOME!
BLAST IT, I NEARLY KILLED WAR MACHINE -- JUST BECAUSE HE GOT IN MY WAY!!
THEN YOU'VE COME TO THE RIGHT PLACE, MICHAEL. I'VE GOT A LOT OF EXPERIENCE WITH SUPERHUMANS AND VIOLENT BEHAVIOR...
...THAT'S AN UNDERSTATEMENT! TREATING THE HULK SHOULD MORE THAN MAKE ME QUALIFIED FOR THIS...
...THOUGH I'M FAR FROM CERTAIN I SHOULD COUNT BRUCE AS ONE OF MY SUCCESSES!
UNO HIRED ME AS A CONSULTANT TO DEVELOP PSYCH PROFILES OF THE SUPERHUMAN THREATS YOUR STRIKE TEAM MIGHT FACE.
I DIDN'T EXPECT TO FIND A SUPERHUMAN ON THE TEAM! BUT NOW THAT I KNOW, I'M HAPPY TO LEND AN EAR.
I APPRECIATE THAT, DOC. IT'S JUST THAT... THAT STORM OUTSIDE IS NOTHING COMPARED TO THE STORM RAGING IN MY HEAD
SOMETIMES I FEEL LIKE I'M TWO PEOPLE.. VENGEANCE VS BADILINO -- Y'KNOW, LIKE A SPLIT PERSONALITY.
RELAX, MICHAEL. YOU WANT TO KNOW ABOUT "SPLIT PERSONALITY," I'LL TELL YOU ABOUT A PATIENT OF MINE...


"HE'S LOCKED UP AT THE PENDLETON INSTITUTE...
"YOU SEE, HE HAD A TOTAL SCHIZOPHRENIC BREAKDOWN-- "SPLIT PERSONALITY"--
"-ABOUT A HALF DOZEN PERSONALITIES, AND HIS POWERS MANIFESTED THEM PHYSICALLY.
"IT TOOK ME AND THE ENTIRE POLICE FORCE OF RENO, NEVADA TO BRING HIM IN!*
"...A HIGH-SECURITY TREATMENT FACILITY NEAR HERE IT'S FOR HIS OWN SAFETY
PENDLETON INSTITUTE FOR THE CRIMINALLY INSANE
*IN HULK ANNUAL #17-- RICHARD
"I CAN'T TELL YOU HIS REAL NAME, OF COURSE...
"...LET'S CALL HIM PSYCHOBABBLE..."
PUH-RAY TO THE LORD THAT YOU WILL RECOGNIZE THE DEMONS DISGUISED AS HEROES...
...BEFORE THEY STRIKE YOU DOWN AND PLUNGE YOU INTO DARKNESS--
SKA-BOOM
HEY! WHAT HAPPENED TO THE TV?!
I'M MISSING REVEREND NICE'S SERMON!!
SKA-KA-BOOM
THE LIGHTS--?!
I-I'M TRAPPED... IN THE DARK... ALONE...
THE VOICES IN MY HEAD... OH, NO, NOT AGAIN...

DON'T YOU HAVE ALL YOUR CALLS HELD DURING A SESSION?
EXCEPT FOR EMERGENCIES! EXCUSE ME FOR A MOMENT...
IF SOMETHING'S HAPPENED WITH BRUCE...
BRING BRING BRING
HELLO? YES, THIS IS DR. LEONARD SAMSON.
I SEE. I'LL BE RIGHT THERE.
PROBLEM?
I'M NOT SURE.
IT SEEMS THERE WAS A TEMPORARY POWER FAILURE AT PENDLETON DUE TO THE STORM. APPARENTLY SOME OF THE PATIENTS ARE AGITATED.
LOOK, DOC, WE CAN FINISH THIS SOME OTHER TIME--
ACTUALLY I WAS WONDERING IF YOU COULD GIVE ME A HAND.
ARE YOU SURE YOU WANT ANOTHER VIOLENT PSYCHO TO DEAL WITH?
NO... BUT THAT'S NOT WHO MICHAEL BADILINO IS, IS IT?
C'MON, THIS IS PROBABLY NOTHING...
"...BUT IN CASE IT'S A LITTLE BIT MORE THAN NOTHING, I COULD USE THE EXTRA MUSCLE."

SOON...
I'M TELLIN' YA, DOC, I DON'T KNOW WHO CALLED YOU, BUT THINGS HERE ARE TOTALLY UNDER CONTROL.
THIS IS PSYCHO-BABBLE'S ROOM COMING UP.
BADILINO, DO ME A FAVOR AND HANG BACK A BIT...
...I'D RATHER YOU TWO DIDN'T MEET--TO MAINTAIN HIS CONFIDENTIALITY.
NO PROBLEM
RIGHT THIS WAY, DOC...
BUT...IT'S EMPTY!
SLAM
WHAT THE DEVIL--!
FEDERAL OFFICER! FREEZE!!
NOT ANYMORE!
THUMP
BOY, HOW MANY TIMES HAVE I GOT TO TELL YOU--
--I'M SICK OF YOU AND YOUR NOISE PLAYIN' COPS AND ROBBERS!!

WHAP
I'LL SLAP THAT MOUTH SHUT TO GET SOME PEACE AND QUIET AROUND HERE!
WHERE'D YOU GET TO, BOY? I'M NOT THROUGH WITH YOU YET!
OH YES YOU ARE.
WHA--?!
THIS MUST BE PSYCHOBABBLE IN THE LORD OF DISCIPLINE PERSONA DOC DESCRIBED.
I DON'T WANT TO HURT HIM, BUT -
I DON'T KNOW WERE YOU CAME FROM, VARMINT--
UUNGH!
--BUT NOBODY MESSES WITH ME DISCIPLINING MY BOY!!
WHAM

YOU SADISTIC--
--SONUVA--
NOOOOOOOO!
THUNK
THERE. THAT OUGHTTA HOLD YOU.
DOC--HANG ON! I SEE OTHERS COMING. MUST BE THE REAL GUARDS--UNLIKE THAT LUNATIC WHO LOCKED YOU IN THERE!
THIS ROOM WAS DESIGNED TO KEEP SUPERHUMANS IN--EVEN MY SUPER STRENGTH WON'T BUST ME!
WE'LL HAVE YOU OUT IN A SECOND!
WAIT, VENGEANCE--I KNOW WHAT HAPPENED NOW!
THE REAL GUARDS AND THE INMATES MUST'VE ALL BEEN CAPTURED--OR KILLED!
THAT TRAITOR GUARD, THE LORD OF DISCIPLINE... EVERYBODY WHO'S NOT LOCKED UP...
...THEY'RE ALL PART OF PSYCHOBABBLE!!
TO BE CONTINUED!

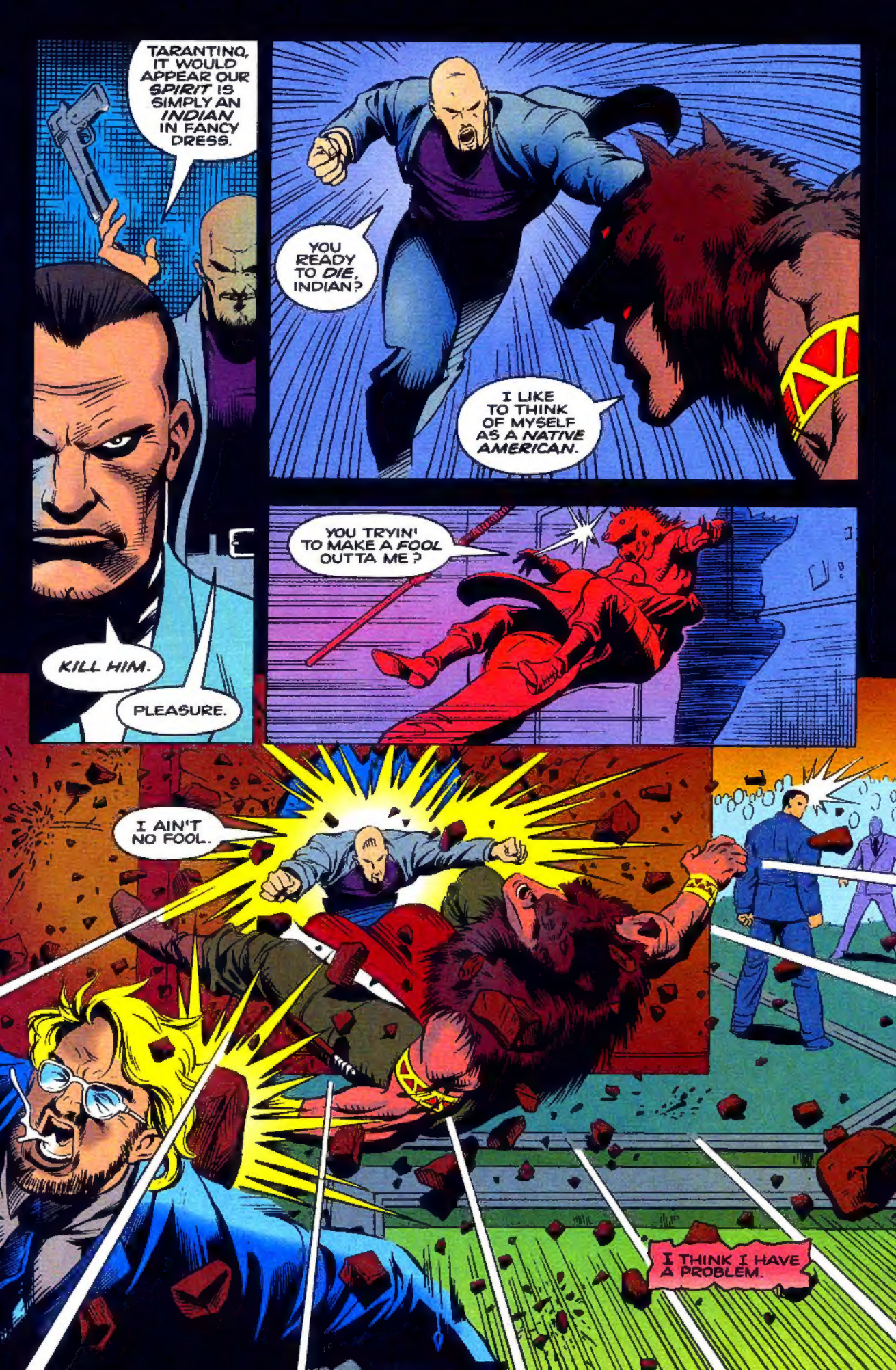
TWENTY YEARS AGO THE MASHANTUCKET PEQUOTS HAD ALL BUT DIED OUT THE GOVERNMENT THREATENED TO CLOSE THE RESERVATION AND END THEIR TRIBAL STATUS.
THE FEW LEFT CONTACTED RELATIVES AND TOLD THEM TO RETURN HOME AND HELP REBUILD THE TRIBE. AFTER A FEW DEALS AND LOANS, THEY BUILT A BINGO HALL.
A FEW YEARS LATER THAT BINGO HALL IS A CASINO RAKING IN $720 MILLION A YEAR. BIGGER THAN TRUMP'S TAJ MAHAL AND THE MAGGIA'S RENO ROYAL.
WHICH IS WHY THE MAGGIA WANT CONTROL OF IT
CA$INO
RED WOLF

THAT'S WHERE I COME IN.
DUMB INJUN AIN'T PUT UP MUCH OF A FIGHT
LET'S FINISH HIM.
THE "INDIAN" IS BILLY TWO-RIVERS. A FRIEND OF MINE. HIM AND HIS STEP-FATHER RUN THE CASINO

LUCKILY FOR HIM, I HAVEN'T
KRAK!
AAARGH!
BILLY'S SPENT TOO LONG BEHIND A DESK. HE'S FORGOTTEN THE WAY OF THE HUNTER.
I LET ONE GO. HE'S HURT AND HE'S SCARED. HE'LL TAKE HIS FEAR WITH HIM AND IT'LL SPREAD TO THE OTHERS. GIVE ME AN EDGE.
BILLY, YOU OKAY?
YEAH, THEY ONLY HURT MY PRIDE--
--AND A COUPLE OF RIBS.
TOOK ME BY SURPRISE THEY'VE GOT JOHN TIED UP IN THE MAIN OFFICE. SAID THEY'D KILL HIM UNLESS HE SIGNS THE CLUB OVER TO THEM.
YOU KNOW JOHN. HE WON'T SIGN.
STILL, THE TWO OF US CAN...
...RED?

YOU'RE OUT OF YOUR DEPTH.
YOU HAVE NO UNDERSTANDING OF THE FINER POINTS OF BUSINESS.
AN ANCESTOR OF MINE, *CAPTAIN MASON*, HAD THE RIGHT IDEA WHEN HE TRIED TO WIPE YOU ALL OUT BACK IN 1637.
THE PEOPLE I REPRESENT WANT THE CASINO...
BOSS, YOU GOTTA DO SOMETHING. THEY'VE SUMMONED SOME KINDA *INDIAN SPIRIT* TO *KILL* US!
RANDALL, YOU'RE RANTING. CALM DOWN AND...
HOW CAN I CALM DOWN WHEN IT'S OUT THERE?! IT *WASN'T HUMAN*, I TELL YA. IT WAS SOME KIND OF *WOLF*. IT...
...THE LIGHTS. NO. IT'S FOLLOWED ME. CAN'T YOU HEAR IT -- SCRATCHING AGAINST THE DOOR?!
SKRITCH
SKRITCH
"*TARANTINO*, IT IS POSSIBLE WE HAVE AN UNWELCOME VISITOR.
"SILENCE HIM"
PLEASURE.
"PROBLEM DEALT WITH, *MR MASON*."

LOBO'S DISTRACTED THEM AT THE DOOR HE'S STILL ONLY A WOLF PUP BUT LEARNING QUICKLY--
--BUYING ME TIME TO MAKE A DRAMATIC ENTRANCE
KE-RASH!
IT'S HIM! HE AIN'T HUMAN, I TELL YA!
MASON, I HAVE A BUSINESS PROPOSITION FOR YOU. LEAVE NOW--
--AND I'LL ONLY *HURT* YOU A LITTLE.


TARANTINO, IT WOULD APPEAR OUR SPIRIT IS SIMPLY AN INDIAN IN FANCY DRESS.
KILL HIM.
PLEASURE.
YOU READY TO DIE, INDIAN?
I LIKE TO THINK OF MYSELF AS A NATIVE AMERICAN.
YOU TRYIN' TO MAKE A FOOL OUTTA ME?
I AIN'T NO FOOL.
I THINK I HAVE A PROBLEM.

I'M BETTER THAN YOU.
FASTER, STRONGER-- A BORN KILLER!
SO ARE YOU READY TO DIE?
NOT TODAY...
...AND NOT BY YOUR HAND.
JOHN STANDS-IN-TIMBER IS A GOOD MAN. RELEASE HIM...
...OR FACE THE CONSEQUENCES.

NO. YOU SURRENDER-- OR THE OLD MAN DIES.
LET HIM GO, MASON-- IT'S OVER.
IT WILL BE IF YOU DON'T DO AS I SAY. NOW...
RED... pant... GOT HERE AS QUICK AS I COULD... pant ...THE POLICE JUST ARRIVED.
THEN MAYBE IT IS OVER.
NO!
AAARGH!
MAYBE I SHOULD JUST KILL THE OLD MAN AND HAVE DONE WITH IT.

Y'KNOW YOU DESERVE TO DIE...
...AND IF OUR ROLES WERE REVERSED, YOU'D KILL ME...
...SO TELL YOUR MEN TO DROP THEIR WEAPONS.
"SHAME, YOU'D MAKE A GREAT POKER PLAYER."
LOBO'S WAITIN' FOR ME, AS I LEAVE. THE CASINO'S ALREADY BACK TO NORMAL. MONEY FLOODING INTO THE RESERVATION.
IT'S A GOOD THING THEY'RE DOIN' THERE. I JUST DON'T SEE MYSELF AS PART OF IT.
AND BESIDES, THEY'RE NOT THE ONLY TRIBE IN NEED OF MY PROTECTION.
TRUE, BUT YOU WON'T BE ALIVE TO SEE IT.
TOUCH ME AND THEY'LL BLOW YOU AWAY.
WHY YOU...you... drop 'em. It's over.
WELL, LOOKS LIKE MASON'S GONNA BE AWAY FOR A WHILE. THE PUBLICITY'LL GET THE MAGGIA OFF OUR BACKS AND HELP BUSINESS.
YOU WANNA STAY ON--WE NEED GOOD PEOPLE ?
NO. I DON'T LIKE GAMBLING.
CKPOT
GRIFF